

1. Definitions

In this Procedure the following definitions apply:

Agent: means a person or organisation acting on behalf of the University.

Implement/implementation: means the release and conduct of a survey of students.

Official survey: means a survey which has been mandated by the University Executive, State or Federal authorities or a survey that is centrally implemented by the Strategic Information and Analysis Unit (SIAU).

Protected period: means a time frame during which the implementation of non-official surveys may be restricted. The usual duration of a protected period extends from one week prior to the implementation of an official survey to two weeks after the release of the survey to students.

Survey: means a process of collecting information from or about persons using methods such as interviews, focus groups, electronic or paper questionnaires. Excluded from this definition is the collection of information using methods requiring participant trial, assessment or experimentation, ad-hoc in-class surveys or ongoing polls of general student opinion.

Survey Manager: means the person who is responsible for the implementation of the survey. In these Procedures, USC staff or students are referred to as internal applicants/Survey Managers; Survey Managers who are not USC staff or students are referred to as external applicants/Survey Managers. USC students undertaking research should confirm with their research supervisor who will perform the role of Survey Manager.

APPROVAL AUTHORITY

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)

DESIGNATED OFFICER

Director, Strategic Information and Analysis Unit

FIRST APPROVED

9 October 2012

LAST AMENDED

9 October 2019

EFFECTIVE START DATE

9 October 2019

REVIEW DATE

9 October 2024

STATUS

Active

2. Principles of student surveys

2.1. Any survey which invites USC students to participate must exhibit the basic principles and methodologies of sound survey design including:

a) a clear focus or aim;

b) methodological design that:

(i) demonstrates that the survey will provide certainty regarding the reliability and accuracy of the survey data and findings;

(ii) can generate judgements, decisions and outcomes based on evidence, and;

(iii) is not overly complicated or onerous for students to complete;

c) clear information for the potential respondents regarding:

(i) the purpose of the survey, including the intended use of the information collected;

(ii) information on privacy matters such as the persons or bodies who will have access to, or who may be provided with, the information collected;

(iii) USC or external support agencies where participants may be exposed to risk;

(iv) how respondents will be able to access a summary of findings from the survey;

(v) how respondents and University community will be advised of any improvements or outcomes made as a consequence of the survey findings (applies to internal Survey Managers who implement a survey to collect information for USC's strategic planning, quality assurance or improvement purposes related to non-academic activities), and;

(vi) the terms and conditions associated with any incentive prizes offered.

3. Application for approval to survey students

3.1. With the exception of Section 3.7, an application to survey students must be made to the Strategic Information and Analysis Unit (SIAU) regardless of whether the survey is initiated from within or external to the University.

3.2. All internal applications to survey students must be submitted to the SIAU using the Application for Approval to Survey Students form available on MyUSC (for staff) and Blackboard (for students). External applicants must email studentsurvey@usc.edu.au and request an External Application to Survey Students form.

3.2.1 A copy of the survey instrument is required to be submitted with the application for approval to survey students in cases where: an internal Survey Manager is implementing a survey where the main purpose is to collect information for USC's strategic planning, quality assurance or improvement purposes, or; the application is submitted by an external Survey Manager.

3.2.2. To minimise delays in consideration of an application for approval to survey students, Survey Managers should note the requirements of Section 4 - Research ethics requirements, Section 5 - Intellectual property matters, Section 6 - Incentives and prizes and Section 7 - Release and Indemnity in these Procedures.

3.3. Applications for approval to survey students must be emailed to studentsurvey@usc.edu.au at least ten (10) working days prior to the desired implementation date.

3.4. All applications for approval to survey students submitted by USC students require the initial approval of their Supervisor.

3.5. All applications for approval to survey students submitted by USC staff require the initial approval of their Head of School or Cost Centre Manager, as appropriate.

3.6. To assist in determining a suitable time frame for implementing a survey, internal applicants are advised to refer to the Schedule of Approved Student Surveys located on MyUSC (for staff) and Blackboard (for students). External applicants need to contact studentsurvey@usc.edu.au for this purpose. The SIAU will refer to this Schedule when considering the proposed survey implementation time frame.

3.7. Surveys mandated by the University Executive, State or Federal authorities, are exempt from the application for approval to survey students process. Intention to implement surveys of this nature must be notified to the SIAU for maintaining the Schedule of Approved Student Surveys. Notification should be made as soon as possible once implementation dates of the survey are known. The Notice of Intention to Implement a Student Survey form available on MyUSC is to be completed and submitted to SIAU by emailing studentsurvey@usc.edu.au.

4. Research ethics requirements

4.1. The Survey Manager is responsible for obtaining ethics approval for a survey of students, if relevant. Refer to the Human Research Ethics - Governing Policy and Human Research Ethics - Procedures for more information.

4.2. Where needed, an application for research ethics approval can be sought in parallel to applying for approval to survey students to the SIAU.

4.3. A final decision regarding approval of an application to survey students submitted by an internal Survey Manager is dependent on the Survey Manager advising the SIAU of the USC ethics approval number, where applicable.

4.4. External Survey Managers must submit a copy of research ethics approval documentation (if applicable) and other documentation specified in the External Application for Approval to Survey Students form.

5. Intellectual property matters

5.1. The Survey Manager is responsible for ensuring intellectual property requirements are met as relevant to the survey being implemented. Refer to the Intellectual Property - Governing Policy for more information.

6. Incentives and prizes

6.1. Prize terms and conditions must accompany any survey where an incentive or other prize is offered for participating in the survey. A copy of the prize terms and conditions must accompany the application for approval to survey students.

6.2. USC staff Survey Managers may use the template available on MyUSC as a guide for writing prize terms and conditions.

6.3. External Survey Managers should seek advice regarding the development of prize terms and conditions from the organisation that provided ethics clearance for their research. As USC is a multi-state university with campuses in Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria any prize terms and conditions must abide by the competition and lottery legislation of each state.

7. Release and Indemnity

7.1. External Survey Managers requesting attendance on USC campus/es for any aspect of implementing a survey of USC students including, but not limited to, promotion of the survey, participant recruitment or data collection must submit a signed Release and Indemnity Agreement form with their External Application for Approval to Survey Students form. The SIAU will supply both the Release and Indemnity Agreement and the External Application for Approval to Survey Students forms to the External Survey Manager.

7.2. The SIAU will arrange for the Release and Indemnity Agreement to be considered and if approved, executed by the relevant USC signatory.

8. Consideration of an application for approval to survey students

8.1. The SIAU may verify the status of ethics approval with the Office of Research for internal applicants.

8.2. In considering an application for approval to survey students, the SIAU may:

- a) set conditions regarding the time frame for implementation to reduce the frequency and proximity of surveys of the same or similar survey target population and in regard to Protected periods;
- b) discuss with the Survey Manager opportunities for incorporating the survey items within another official survey;
- c) provide advice regarding similar surveys that have been implemented which may serve the purpose of further investigations;
- d) request further information from the Survey Manager regarding the planned outcomes of the survey where the survey relates to or seeks feedback on current or planned USC services, projects or strategies, and/or;
- e) make recommendations to the Survey Manager to assure or improve the quality of student surveys.

8.3. For applications for approval to survey (current) students where the survey target population falls outside the remit of the Survey Manager's Head of School or Cost Centre Manager, further approval from the relevant academic or business area may be required based on the focus of the survey. The SIAU will seek these further approvals on behalf of the Survey Manager.

8.4. For applications for approval to survey (alumni) students, further approval from the Director, Development Office, or nominee, will be required. The SIAU will seek these further approvals on behalf of the Survey Manager.

8.5. Non-official student surveys will be restricted from implementation during protected periods where the survey target population is the same or similar to an official survey. Protected periods for official surveys are published in the Schedule of Approved Student Surveys located on MyUSC (for staff) and Blackboard (for students); available to external applicants on request via studentsurvey@usc.edu.au.

9. Notification of the outcome of an application for approval to survey students

9.1. The SIAU will endeavour to advise the Survey Manager via email prior to the desired implementation date regarding whether the application for approval to survey students has been approved and any conditions regarding the implementation of the survey.

9.2. Where a student survey is approved for implementation a Notice of Approval to Implement a Student Survey will be issued to the Survey Manager. Where a student survey is not approved written communication will be issued to the Survey Manager.

9.3. Following approval to implement a student survey, the SIAU will record the survey in the Schedule of Approved Student Surveys which is published on MyUSC (for staff) and Blackboard (for students); available to external applicants on request via studentsurvey@usc.edu.au.

10. Alterations to the timeframe or scope of approved surveys of students

10.1. The Survey Manager must advise the SIAU of any change to the anticipated survey implementation timeframe, size or type of the survey target population of an approved survey of students via studentsurvey@usc.edu.au as soon as known. This may result in conditions being placed on the survey as specified in Section 8.2.

11. Implementation of student surveys

11.1. A student survey may be implemented only where:

- a) the SIAU has approved implementation of the survey, and;
- b) any conditions associated with the implementation of the survey have been met.

11.2. In cases where the University is invited, or is required, to participate in a student survey coordinated by an external organisation and flexibility exists in the implementation timeframe, implementation dates will be considered in regard to the impact on participants and other surveys.

11.3. The USC Student Communications team can assist with the promotion of surveys via the USC Student Newsletter or via targeted emails (internal applicants only). The SIAU Notice of Approval to Implement a Student Survey must accompany any request for assistance. Inquiries need to be directed to studentcomms@usc.edu.au.

12. Access to data and findings

12.1. Where an internal Survey Manager implements a survey where the main purpose is to collect information for USC's strategic planning, quality assurance or improvement purposes related to non-academic activities, the Survey Manager is required to provide a report to a USC representative or committee as advised by the SIAU. A summary of findings and USC's response to the findings is required to be published for student access.

12.2. In addition to Section 12.1, the SIAU may seek access from the internal Survey Managers to data or findings of surveys administered for institutional strategic planning, quality assurance or improvement purposes related to non-academic activities to enable the triangulation of student perceptions and efficiencies in survey development.

12.3. The SIAU may request access to a summary of findings or a full report on the analysis of the survey results for surveys implemented by external Survey Managers.

13. Responsibilities

13.1. In all cases, the Survey Manager is responsible for:

- a) adhering to the requirements of the Student Survey – Operational Policy and this associated Procedure;
- b) capturing all records at every stage of the implementation of a survey in an approved records management system. Internal Survey Managers are required to capture records in accordance with USC's Information and Records Management – Procedures. Records may include, but are not limited to, the survey instrument, data, findings, communications, selection and notification of prize recipients, and complaints.
- c) protecting the privacy of students' personal information;
- d) ensuring confidentiality in the use of survey target population data and survey responses;
- e) ensuring secure storage of survey target population data and responses and restricting access to authorised persons;
- f) ensuring survey target population data is not disclosed to third parties,
- g) ensuring anonymity in the reporting of data except as expressly agreed to by respondents;
- h) addressing any queries, concerns or complaints from the survey population in accordance with any ethics approval granted, and
- i) publishing outcomes of findings as appropriate.

13.2. In cases where a survey is implemented without an application for approval to survey students having been approved in accordance with these Procedures, the SIAU will take reasonable steps to contact the Survey Manager and advise them of the requirements of the Student Survey – Operational Policy and this associated Procedure for future reference. Details of such surveys will be recorded in the Schedule of Approved Student Surveys. Such communications will be stored in the University's records management system.

13.3. The SIAU will capture records of an application for approval to survey students in accordance with USC's Information and Records Management – Procedures.

13.4. USC students who are dissatisfied with the outcome of an application for approval to survey students may request a review of the decision by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) under the provisions of the Student Grievance Resolution – Governing Policy and associated procedures. Similarly, staff and external applicants may request a review of the decision regarding an application for approval to survey students by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic).

END

RELATED DOCUMENTS

[Student Survey - Operational Policy](#)

LINKED DOCUMENTS

[Student Survey - Operational Policy](#)